

JANUARY 1ST, 2011

# Harper Center Bulletin

## Williamstown Council on Aging

### January 2011 Newsletter

Hey everybody! Happy New Year!!!

The Williamstown Council on Aging rocks within the confines of World Headquarters in the Harper Center at 118 Church Street in town. We're open for business from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday and on Sunday at 11:00 for lunch. Call us at 458-8250, fax 458-5156 or email me with comments; [bogrady@williamstown.net](mailto:bogrady@williamstown.net) We've been providing service to Williamstown's elders since 1966!

This line between the old year and the new year is funny, isn't it? It's different than the change in time between months, from one to another, or even from one day to the next. It really feels like a break in time from the old into the new! Out with the worn out calendars from last year, in with the new, unmarked ones for this year! Out with old habits, hurts and nagging issues! We head into a new year full of hope that everything will turn out ok and that any weird badness from last year stays there. And by there we mean literally in the past, dead, beyond that border in last year, cold and unable to reach us. It's part of our culture. We write about it and sing about it and wish each other Happy New Year. What would make it a happy new year? Maybe we should all try to figure it out. I think I'll try to buy into this so let's leave the past in last year and start over in a new year with a clean slate of business and try not to sully it with petty crap and nonsense. What do you think?

You know what's funny? A lot of the commentary I heard following the big snowstorm we had earlier in the week was a reminiscence about the big blasts of the past. No real complaining about the size of the storm, just the feeling that this was a good old fashioned blizzard. That, in its' own right, was quite refreshing. The snow itself? Well, it's beautiful, isn't it? For now anyway! Happy New Year, I hope it's a great one!



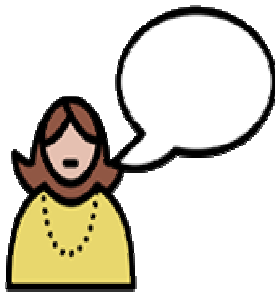
#### Inside this issue:

Voices	2
Taxes!!!	2
2011 BP Clinics	2
Beans And Barkers	3
Winter Coats	3
If it snows...	3
Page 4 notes	4

### 2011 Book Discussion Group

Yes, it's time to start thinking about what books you're going to read this year. Oh, I sort of like to line things up in advance, I'm just strange that way-I can tell you, for instance, that I will read a book called "I'll be home for Christmas" next December-it's about Christmas during the war years...yeah, never mind. It's a theme story, darn it, can't read it in July!

Anyway, each month our Book Discussion Group meets at the Milne Library on the First Friday monthly at 10:00 to discuss the book of the month...for the next two months the stories will be Steinbeck's Cannery Row and Sweet Thursday on January 7th and in February, on the 4th, a tale entitled "Winter's Bone" by Daniel Woodrell. Interested? Just show up at the library at 10:00! We'll publish the entire list next month!



## Saving your voice

While there are many styles of personal communication, ranging from the loud to the soft spoken folk in our lives, it's true that the vast majority of communicating we do is by speech. Oh, we do our fair share of pointing and waving out hands and arms about but mostly we talk, big, quickly or otherwise.

What if we couldn't express ourselves? What if something happened to our voices and we were not able to speak? We all know someone whose speech was affected by an adverse event-say a stroke. What happens then?

Fortunately, there is help for this. A speech therapist is an individual with the special talents to be able to work with someone whose ability to speak has been compromised for one reason or another and thru a series of exercises can provide hope of recovery for these unlucky individuals. How about someone who has difficulty swallowing? Yes, they work with these people too. On January 25, Scarlet Watson, Speech Therapist at Williamstown Commons will be here at Harper to talk about saving your voice, and what you might be able to do to preserve one of your most important assets. She'll talk at 12:30. we'll cook out for the first time this year first at noon-chicken off the barbie. Sign up now!

## Taxes, taxes, taxes

Some pay too much. Some don't pay enough. It's not fair, but the tax man will be here sniffing after his share of you income very soon, the due date as usual, April 15th, and that is only too close for comfort, don't you think?

Anyway, there is hope as Pim Goodbody and his band of trained and certified AARP Tax Aide volunteers will be here again to help. They'll be in the house on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 and on Saturday mornings from 9:00 to noon. We'll be accepting calls for appointments beginning the week of January 10th. As usual, participants are urged to come in at least a half an hour early and to bring last years tax returns as well as any pertinent paperwork received for this years filing.

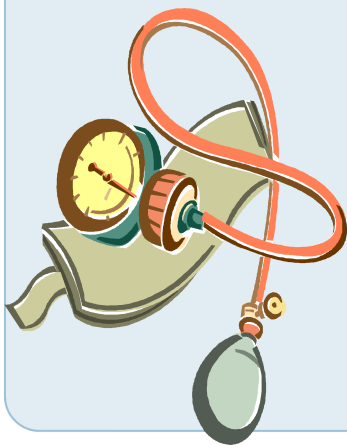
For the record, the tax aide program is FREE, open to all taxpayers of modest means and, while special attention is paid to senior tax returns, individuals of any age are welcome.

## The 2011 Blood Pressure Clinic Schedule!

The 2011 monthly Blood Pressure Clinics will be again sponsored by our friends at Premier Health Care and of course administrated by our buddy Janet Richardson, our "official" blood pressure nurse! The dates for 2011 will remain the second Tuesday of the month and the time noon-plenty of time to get your blood pressure checked before you go to the Friendship Club meeting...just joking!

Anyway-here we go; January 11, February 8, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8, and December 13.

So, there it is, your 2011 BP clinic schedule-oh, and the schedule for Friendship Club meeting in 2011 as well! Two for the price of one! Who says bargains no longer happen!



## Beans and Barker Extravaganza

I suppose that I should ask which part of this equation will be the barking half...

Every year, we have managed to do a big gourmet hot dog feeding for the masses. I'm not talking about those small things we serve at bingo or off the grill-I mean those BIG gourmet dogs-like the Nathan's Coney Island brand- and with exotic filling such as tomatoes, hot peppers and so on for the top of the dog! Not just mustard and catsup-it's New Years right?

For those of us who adhere to a vegetarian diet, there will be a tofu dog option, and yeah, I will be actually sautéing these carefully with peppers and onions...I guess that we'll have soda as the beverage of choice- it's sort of a picnic, right? Oh, and potato chips...cool.

Then the Aladdin's will play for us-they've not been here since before Halloween, they're coming to help us celebrate the onset of the new year and we know they play songs everyone knows. So, sign up and indicate your preference if you haven't done so-a good time will be had by all!



## Coats

It has become very cold and winterish outside, surprise, surprise. We hear it all the time, people unhappy because Mother Nature happened to drop the temperature and sprinkle the earth with lots of cold, soft, white snow. Yeah, we know. But let's stop for a moment and think about the people who really have issues with the cold because they don't have adequate winter wear to go around outside with.

Shawn Godfrey from the Village Ambulance had an idea that maybe the community would be able to delve into its closets and storage spaces for unused and unwanted coats and donate them to the less fortunate. I thought that was a marvelous idea and offered space to collect coats for our less fortunate brothers and sisters and so we will. On Monday afternoon, January 10, we'll collect coats for folks who need them here at the Harper Center and we'll arrange distribution to those in need. Oh-if you can't wait until that Monday-feel free to leave them here or at the ambulance on Water Street anytime before then! And thanks in advance!



## When it snows...

OK, let's talk about a couple snow rules in effect when we get snow here in Williamstown and how it affects operations here at the Williamstown Council on Aging. Ready? Here we go!

### Rule Number 1: Safety First!

When we have snow, we may cancel regularly scheduled daily programs at the Harper Center. It is equally possible that we will not operate the van if the weather is really bad. We don't want people out if the weather is hazardous, and we won't operate the van if the roads are slippery. Sorry, this is New England and snow emergencies are to be expected.

### Rule Number 2: Safety First!

We're sorry if we create inconveniences for anyone. We don't want to, but sometimes, it can't be helped! Always call with questions or concerns. Thanks! Brian. 458-8250



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Elaine Keyes, our computer guru, tells me that the computer classes have gone well for the folks who've taken them. And yes, they are continuing as we speak-but at the moment they're individual lessons, specifically designed for each individual and their own personal skill level. That my friends, is very important, we know how things are lost in transition in bigger groups and how important the personal touch can be. If you're interested in computer lessons-for all skill levels, mind you, let me, Brian, know-458-8250. Classes are FREE, that means they don't cost anything, and we have computers for use right here at the Harper Center so you don't even have to buy one! Ever! They open for public use! And folks, it's probably a good idea to learn how to use a computer before you buy one-they can be a bit spendy if you were to go out and buy one. Ours are fully equipped with all the internet bells and whistles you'll ever need! So stop by and check it out. The lessons and computer lab are ready! Did I tell you that they're FREE?

## **Page 4 news and notes**

Our Foot Care Nurse Kip Moeller will be here on January 18th at 9:00 to trim those toenails and massage those aching feet. Alas, as many of you know, this will be the last roundup for Kip, she's downsizing her practice to stay closer to home and her efforts here will be taken by someone new-more on that next month! We've enjoyed working with you Kip, wish you could stay...

Peg Jenks, our SHINE Counselor will be in the house on January 19th at 10:30 to meet with folks who have questions about their health care insurance. Peg is also available for individual consultations at other times as well-contact the COA office at the Harper Center-458-8250-and we'll arrange a session!

The monthly Brown Bag delivery from the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts will take place on Friday afternoon, January 28th. For those unfamiliar with Brown Bag, it's literally a brown paper sack filled with fresh fruits and veggies in season and shelf stable food items as well. Interested? Contact us and we'll be happy to assist you with the minimal application process.

Finally, if you like this newsletter and are interested in receiving it via email right to your home computer, let us know and we'll arrange home delivery! It's very green you know!

